

spirits of Its own ancestors, the whole tribe worships publicly the spirits of Its departed monarchs, paying to each of these invisible potentates, whose reality they never dream of doubting, a homage of precisely the same sort as that which they render to his living successor on the throne. Such a religion of the dead is by no means incompatible with the recognition of higher spiritual powers who may have an origin quite Independent of the worship of ancestors. We have seen In point of fact that many tribes, whose practical religion is concentrated chiefly on their dead, nevertheless acknowledge the existence of a supreme god, the creator of man and of all things, whom they do not regard as a glorified ghost. The Baganda, the most progressive and advanced of all the Bantu tribes, had a whole pantheon of gods whom they sharply distinguished from the worshipful spirits of their forefathers.

Perhaps Yet In spite of this distinction we may suspect that in many

African cases the seeming line of division between gods and worshipful gods, who ghosts is deceptive ; and that the magic touch of time, which idistin^' distorts and magnifies the past, especially among peoples who guished see it only through the haze of oral tradition, has glorified and «hosts transfigured many a dead man Into a deity. This at all were once events seems to have been the history of some of the Baganda gods. On this subject our best authority says that " the principal gods appear to have been at one time human beings, noted for their skill and bravery, who were afterwards deified by the people and invested with supernatural powers.³¹¹ Mukasa held the highest rank among the gods

of Uganda. He was a benign god ; he never asked for the life of any human being, but animals were sacrificed to him at the yearly festivals, and also at other times when the king, or a leading chief, wished to consult him. He had nothing to do with war, but sought to heal the bodies and minds of men. He was the god of plenty ; he gave the people an increase of food, cattle, and children.

From the legends still current it seems to be almost certain that he was a human being who, because of his benevolence, came to be regarded as a god. . . . The legends about Mukasa are of great interest; they show how the human element

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 271.